This is a copy of a booklet --

Concerning the McCann Family

"If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction." - Shakespeare

Foreword

To unlock the doors which separate the Past from the Present is to go adventuring. He who turns the key experiences a thrill such as Father Marquette must have felt when first he launched his canoe on the bosom of the mighty Father of Waters, such as Commander Byrd must even now be lifting to as he guides the nose of this great plane toward the South Pole. How much more interesting it becomes when one enters a Past inhabited by one's own flesh and blood! Think of becoming acquainted with a great-grandfather who breathed the same air as Burke, Sheridan, and Goldsmith, or of knowing a not-to-remote ancestor who helped engineer the dashing if hopeless Irish Rebellion of 1798.

Among the effects of the late Benjamin F. McCann were found two papers, one a manuscript read long since at a family gathering, the other a letter from Scotland to his brother, T. A. McCann, both grown ragged and yellow with the passing of the years. Since they record names and places and events dimmed by age and intimately connected with McCann lineage, these seem to be just such keys to the Past as we have been considering an as such are naturally the property, not of their author's immediate family, but of all the McCanns. Both appear here in their original form; no attempt has been made to rephrase or polish either. That as well as the delightful experience of reading between the lines has been left to the fertile imagination of the reader.

Franklin T. McCann,December 1, 1928. Dayton, Ohio

THE McCANNS

The most interesting history of the McCanns that could be written would be one largely filled with personal incident. As we are expected to demand your attention but for a short time, we have kept almost wholly out of this interesting field in which our people are peculiarly rich and shall present only a brief sketch leaving the real history to be completed by you under the shade tree and around the family hearth-stone.

***

Could we but gather up the thread of history which has been so often broken in the past, who knows but that we should find some of our ancestors listening to the melancholy story of the Fall as it came from the lips of the first law-breakers? Who will deny that they may have stood with Noah just before that historic wet spell and watched the animals go in two by two? Or

shall we believe, as some scientists would try to teach us, that they had not yet ceased to walk on all fours? But this is a matter of conjecture, not fact. while no one can successfully deny such claims, we cannot positively assert that a McCann even had the honor of laying a stone on the tower of Babel or of molding a brick in Pharaoh's field. In the absence of the facts, we are inclined today with Burdette that we don't care a picayune whether our great----grandfather was a monkey or a horse-theif--just so the connection isn't too close. As the name indicates, the McCanns are of Celtic blood and were originally located in Bohemia, whence the Celts were driven about the time of the Christian Era. They were finally pushed westward into Ireland, and the first mention made of the McCanns there is at the decisive battle between the Irish and Scandinavian forces, at Clontarf near Dublin, in 1014. In the archives at Washington today may be found the record that General McCann, the Brave and the Bold, was killed in this battle of Clontarf.

The McCanns as represented by the connection here today are not the typical Irishman from Tipperary, Cork, or Limerick, but contain a mixture of Scottish blood; not the paddy but the weaver from Belfast. Our ancestry were natives of the Province of Ulster, of the Counties Down and Armagh. Long before the feudal system had lost its power, we find them located at Portadown, a market and manufacturing town on the Bann River,eleven miles northeast of Armagh. Of this town Chamber's Encyclopedia says: "It was formerly the seat of the McCanns a clan tributary to the O'Neils and formed part of the territory appropriated by James I and afterwards by Charles I of England. The O'Neils were the most powerful clan in the Ulster province and afterwards forced Queen Elizabeth to crown their leader Earl of Tirone."

The name McCann is by no means an uncommon one either in this country or in Ireland. But it is only with the history of our own connection that we are interested today. It is worthy of record that within this connection, not a Catholic is to be found, while without it the great majority of McCanns espouse that religion. Presbyterianism is the favorite creed, and early in the 17th century John McCann was banished from Scotland for vigorously upholding this belief. This act was but the beginning of that stormy time in which the Scotch Presbyterians broke out in open rebellion rather than submit to the doctrines of the Episcopal church, and which finally culminated in the execution of Charles I and the establishment of the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell

For a century and a half now, history is occupied with greater names. Luther's Reformation, a century before had burst like a bomb-shell in Europe and the continents had not yet ceased to vibrate. The New World had attracted the attention of persecuted bands and the Atlantic forests were falling before the settler's ax. French Huguenots, Spanish Cavaliers, Scotch

Presbyterians, Irish Catholics, and English Puritans - one after another they come - but where are the McCanns? Like the ground hog in winter they seem to have holed up, and it's "divil a bit" can ye find out about them until you come down to the memory of those still living. As the hound which has lost the trail instinctively comes back to where he left it, so let us revisit the Castle on the Bann. In the long interval, Feudalism has decayed and the old Castle has been leveled with the ground. Portadown is populated by another people and the objects of our search are scattered - who knows where. We look here in vain, but if, in the middle of the 18th century, on some summer Sabbath morning we had driven up to the old Presbyterian church at Killinchy, a short distance out from Belfast, we should have met a family of six children, consisting of four brothers, one sister and one-half brother. Their names are McCann and their parents are distant from the writer five generations. This family all became extensive land-owners and from them descended directly the McCanns represented here. Now at the risk of being tedious, I want to trace briefly the pedigree of the three distinctive groups of the American family of McCanns and each one may then trace up his own relationship. On account of the repetition of names you will have to pay close attention to follow me, as there were Grandpap Sam, Uncle Sam, Squire Sam, Archie's Sam, Tom's Sam and Irish Sam, and the Jim's, Toms, and Archies are not much better. As it is stated in the book of the Chronicles, one of these brothers aforesaid,named Thomas, begat five children, John, George Alexander, James and Nancy. Of these children John and Nancy lived and died on the Emerald Isle. James came to this country in 1793 and was the first McCann to land on American soil. He stayed for several years near Philadelphia and then emigrated to what is now Muskingum County, Ohio, which was then a wilderness. From him is descended the settlement so well and favorably known as the Shannon and Frazeyburg McCanns. Old Squire Sam, now above 80 years of age, who represented county in the Legislature of 1853-54,and whose influence in his community has been unbounded, is the oldest child living and is present today. James' two brothers, George and Alexander, afterwards came to this country from Ireland and located near Newberg, New York, here there is a second extensive settlement of the name.

But let us return to the one half-brother left at the old church at Killinchy. From him has sprung the stock near Dresden, Zanesville, and Maroa, Illinois. He was a weaver as well as a tiller of the soil and the father of six children, John, Archibald, Samuel, George, James and Sarah. Of these John and George lived and died handling the loom. Sarah married John Carse and two of their sons afterwards became wealthy citizens of Chicago, while a third ran a vessel between Belfast and Quebec as a lumberman, and had the honor of introducing Indian Corn into his native County Down. James landed in America in 1850 with five children, two of whom are now at Zanesville and the remainder are located near Maroa, Illinois. Their mother, Elizabeth Hamilton, is still living at the advanced age of 87

years.

But by far most interesting chapter in the history of the McCanns clusters around Samuel, Archibald, and their father in connection with the Irish Rebellion of 1798. You will remember that that unprincipled monarch, King George III, was yet on the throne of England. That monarch whom we as Americans learned to despise for his oppression of the New England Colonies in 1776. The war for American Independence had been fought and gained. This had not yet lost its effect on the Irish heart and a few bold spirits determined to win for their country what Washington, and Franklin, and Adams had gained for theirs. In this struggle the father and his two sons took a very lively interest. For a time the patriots were successful but the fatal Battle of Belna Hench completely shattered their forces and sealed the doom of the survivors. The father was captured and paid the penalty with his head while his property was confiscated to the state. The house was reduced to ashes - even the bed which the mother had carried from the building was tossed back into the flames and the orphan children left to the mercy of the storms. Samuel managed to effect his escape and landed at Norfolk, Virginia, in 1800, chased by a British man-of-war. He plunged almost beyond the limits of civilization and settled on a government tract, a mile below where Shannon now stands. At that time, Zanesville had but three huts and the country for 100 miles to the north was unbroken forest. The old rifle which had brought down the British red-coat accompanied him to his place of solitude and brought him many a feast in his forest home. Though a pioneer with all that meant in those days, he was free and here in peace he reared a family represented before us by several generations.

Archibald, though more fortunate than his father, was not so lucky as his brother, and a description of his career would sound more like romance than history. Again and again has the hot blood mounted to my cheeks as I sat at my father's knee and listened to him recount the escapes of his worthy sire. Having been an officer in the Rebellion his head was greatly desired by the enemy. To describe his miraculous rescue by an Irish maiden while the heads from a score of his immediate comrades fell before the glittering axe of the executioner; to relate the circumstances of his capture and imprisonment at Belfast and second escape on the day previous to the one set for his execution; to follow him into another part of Ireland where months he was known as the "Antic Fool" and as such entertained the nobility at their festive boards, where only too often that intelligence and manly dignity which he could not entirely smother provoked the remark:"Poor fellow, he has seen better days"; to follow him still further as a schoolteacher under an assumed name, while on the front of the house in which he was teaching he might read a poster offering a reward of 500L for the head of Archibald McCann; to relate all these incidents, we say, would doubtless be very interesting to the few but tedious to the many. although the ports were closely guarded, he

finally managed to reach an American vessel and land in this country in 1803 or 1804. He afterwards made the acquaintance of and married Mary Mathews,who, strange to relate, had crossed the ocean in the same vessel with himself. The "Red-Coat Divils" as he called the British soldiers never won back his love, and he is said to have been the first man to volunteer his services in Washington for the war of 1812. Out of a family of 9 children, but one is living, and that his namesake, Dr. A.C.McCann of Antwerp, Ohio. Archibald, Senior, is the only one, we believe, who served in the War of 1812, but in the Civil War there were numerous representatives, several of whom lost their lives in that deadly strife. Thomas' family from Frazeysburg was especially well represented by three sons and one grandson. George and Samuel perished, and the famous Battle of Pittsburg Landing swept away the first-born of Squire Sam's household.

In appearance the McCanns, as a rule, are above the average height, straight, well developed, and wiry; of great physical endurance and unquestioned grit. Their Scotch blood shows itself in a general desire for education. Schoolteachers abound in almost every family and every mother's so;n of them can read and write. Farming is the chief occupation of the great majority, yet all the professions, especially medicine, have eager votaries.

Of the McCann name, belonging to this family and living at present, we have been able to count up 152, of whom 84 live in Muskingum County. Of the whole connection we have no data on which to base a calculation, but if they could be crowded together we should be attempted to say of them as did the enthusiastic American of his country - that they are bounded on the north by the Aurora Borealis and on the south by the Precession of the Equinox, on the east by Primeval Chaos and on the west by the Day of Judgment.

Our imperfect sketch is closed. We may not lift the veil of Futurity. And as impartial history can only be written at a distance, the present generations must pass unnoticed. Each family boasts of the champion who was never floored in a wrestling match, never outrun,outjumped, outcradled, or beaten in a game of horseshoe. However much we may doubt such claims we must accept them as facts, for precedent will not allow us to" go behind the returns." The McCanns lay no claim to royal blood or kingly crowns. Their aspirations have been higher. They have striven to be honest men. Except as prisoner of war,no jail or penitentiary door has ever closed upon a single victim from the connection and although they have lived in Muskingum County for almost a hundred years, there has yet to be entered on the dockets of her courts a criminal proceeding against the first one of them.

Aside from those who have fulfilled their mission there yet remain among us splendid specimens of a sturdy race. There are Squire Sam and Aunt Jane; Rebecca; William, and Sallie Crawford;

Elizabeth and Betsey McCann, all of whom we should be glad to do reverence in any assembly in Christendom. But as we look around us today and see the connection of this family with the Mathews and the Sibbetts, the Hamiltons and the Crawfords, the Frazers and the Dorseys we are disposed to deny the fitness of that old comparison of the McCann race to a potato patch allowing the inference that the best part is underground.

Generous, frank, industrious, and economical it is said of some of them that they will squeeze a penny till the eagle squawks - yet it ought to be said also that no man was ever turned away from their doors in want, and that the county poor houses would be turned into factories or sheepbarns if it were left for the McCanns to people them.

***

Extract from a letter written by B.F. McCann to his brother T.A. McCann on July 13,1890, from the St. Enoch Station Hotel, Glasgow, Scotland.

"But to me, the most interesting day I have had was one spent in Belfast and vicinity. I wanted to go up that way and meet A___here in Glasgow, but it didn't suit his fancy, so when we got to Dublin, I told him that he might see Dublin for a day alone as I intended to go on up which I did in less than an hour after my arrival. I found George Carse, spoken of by cousin John, and through him found John McCann, a son of grandfather's brother John, and the only living representative on our side in the island. He is 66 years old, six feet high, straight as an arrow and as active as I am today. He is engaged in the commission business, and is a man of whom we need not be ashamed. His only child, a daughter,married a prominent R.R.official and lives in London. I hope to call on them when there.

"Cousin John treated me like a prince. When he found I could only stay one day he closed his place of business and we struck Killinchy, he old family homestead. I stood by our greatgrandfather's grave and sat in his old seat at church. The building was erected in 1739 and is used every Sunday. It is built with four wings and the pulpit in the center. There was an entrance at each wing, and the old clock built with the church and facing three ways, is said to be the best timekeeper in the country. Our people entered the west door and sat about half way up. I went along the roads and up the lanes and over the old premises until I was about run down.

"The stone homestead still bears the inscription up on the front left hand corner, `Built by James McCann in the year 1790.' This is the house in which our grandfather spun and wove, and I went through every room. It is not far from where he was born, that house having been burned during the Irish troubles. On the same site, however, John McCann, our countryman's father, built another in 1816, as the inscription above the door evidences.

I also went through that. A Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons are occupying it at present.

"I went to the old school house where our ancestors used to teach. The benches and equipment are the same used by them. We come by our teaching qualities naturally. The McCanns enjoy a good name in that business here also. In Belfast, an old withered up man who I had employed to guide me about town seemed so well posted that I asked him if he knew anything about the McCanns who used to be about Killinchy. He grasped my hand at once with "Sure an' now I know you're me friend, for I went to school to James McCann at Killinchy, an' the likes of'im has niver been known here since, Sir.'

`I went out in the evening and took supper with cousin John and then left for Dublin. He has a beautiful little home, though I think he only rents it. It is some distance out in one of the suburban villages. He is intelligent and a good Presbyterian. It seemed to delight him to see me - the first American McCann he had ever seen.

End of Booklet.